

# *Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons*

## *Who's Looking at the Moon?*

Standard: I. Culture  
II. Time, Continuity, and Change  
III. People, Places, and Environments  
IV. Individual Development and Identity  
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions  
VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption  
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society  
IX. Global Connections  
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 9–12 (product portfolio)

Objectives: The student will:

- Discuss with the class the reasons Sputnik shocked the nations
- View and discuss the first astronauts on the moon and its meaning in the Cold War
- Prepare a product portfolio about the space race

Time: 1 class period

Materials: Documents: **1957** *The Dramatic Impact of Sputnik*  
**1961** *The Goal of Sending a Man to the Moon*

Exercises: Choices for a Project Portfolio

Materials: 10-12 page portfolio for each student (they can purchase)

Procedures:

### *Setting the Stage*

Americans were shocked in 1957 when the Russians became the first to launch an earth-orbiting satellite, called "sputnik," which in Russian means "fellow traveler." Americans saw this as a political defeat and felt that the United States had lost prestige in the eyes of other nations. As a result, an immediate emphasis was placed on improving math and science education (sound familiar?), and the U.S. Government put its own space program into high gear.

The space race had begun. Soon after the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy, he spoke to Congress and shared his vision for America's future. Space exploration played a major role as he called on the nation to send a man to the moon before the end of the decade. The Soviets were less open about the competition, but they too, shot for the moon. On July 20, 1969, American astronaut Neil Armstrong landed on the moon—just hours before, an unmanned Soviet ship had crashed and burned on the moon's surface. The United States had "won" the space race.

Students will read documents about the space race and prepare a product portfolio to commemorate the events.

*Pre Lesson*

Download any Youtube clip of man walking on the moon, ready to show to the class in your preferred manner.

*Day One*

- 1.** As students arrive, distribute the document on the Sputnik launch and ask them to read and be prepared to share their reactions to the telegram. Discuss the reasons why the United States would consider this action as a "Cold War."
- 2.** Ask students to look in their textbook for any follow-up measures taken by the United States during the late 1950s. (Remind them that after this crisis, science and higher levels of mathematics became a requirement for high school graduation.)
- 3.** Now distribute the document, *The Goal of Sending a Man to the Moon*—Kennedy's vision for space. Ask them to note his opening remarks and the other issues he is speaking about, as well as what he wants to do with the military and civil defense. Discuss a few of those points, then go to section IX. Ask volunteers to participate in "popcorn reading" aloud of this new vision for the United States. (After finishing a section, each selects another student to continue.)
- 4.** Discuss their opinions about JFK's challenge to go to the moon. Discuss, too, whether or not they believe it happened (many conspiracy theorists still think the landing was filmed on a sound stage.) Ask how many still dream of going there or wanting to be an astronaut?
- 5.** Show the NASA video of the two astronauts walking on the moon, twice asking the students to watch very carefully. What do they see? Repeat the video, as some will not see the same thing as others?
- 6.** Distribute *Choices for a Project Portfolio* and explain how to do a portfolio either in text or electronically (They may email them to the teacher, but advise them to hand in a hard copy, as well.)
- 7.** Plan a date for this product to be turned in. Check on their progress each day, but three days should be sufficient. Decide what this grade will count as—perhaps equal to a test?

Extension Activities:

- 1.** Show portions of the film *Rocket Boy* and follow with discussion of interest in outer space.
- 2.** Show a lengthier version of the excitement over the moon landing. There are all kinds of films for classroom use that are much longer and more detailed. ■